



White Horse Medical Practice

Patient Participation Group

HEALTH SUMMIT Tuesday September 23rd 2014.

Some facts:

15 people were present for some or all of the meeting. These broke down as: 4 Core Group members; 3 Practice Representatives; the Visiting speaker and her accompanying outreach worker; 6 registered actual or potential patients.

The meeting began with a general welcome to the third Summit and an introduction of the visiting speaker, Catherine Blaxhall, by Marcus Laphorn. There followed a thirty minutes power-point presentation about the work of Carers Oxfordshire; a film for a further ten minutes, and a Question and Answer session of fifteen minutes, with Marcus concluding the occasion with final thanks and farewells shortly after 7.30pm.

Carers Oxfordshire.

In the context 'Carers' are not paid professionals, but unpaid adults (so 18 years old or older), who look after to a greater or lesser extent another adult. Carers Oxfordshire offer an extensive free service to such Carers of information, advice, and support both practical and emotional. As, nationwide, it has been calculated that Carers save the Exchequer £119 billion a year, the well-being of Carers is vital, and thus the budget for the free service is ring-fenced. Anyone who is a Carer should find out in what ways life could be made easier by engaging with the Service. Some aspects of the service – grants, respite assistance, emergency carers service for examples – can only be applied for if one has registered as a Carer, a simple procedure.

Looking at Faringdon in particular, one of the nine professional outreach workers is assigned to our patch, (currently Dipti Gangiraju). There is a Faringdon Carers group that meets once a month. This is so poorly attended, however, that it may have to be shut down.

The film, short but moving, centred round four caring scenarios, illustrating aspects of the Service available to the Carers, and how the Service brought vital assistance and relief to those depicted.

Questions and Answers.

Dr. Anna Douglas joined the meeting at this point. Marcus made it clear that questions could be directed to either the speaker or the doctor.

*Gene Webb wanted to explore the possible link up between the Practice and the Service. As Dr. Douglas had not met Catherine Blaxhall before, the evening was achieving one positive link straight away! Needless to say the Data Protection Act currently inhibits what might be regarded as common sense liaison and disclosure. There may be Carers who are not known as such to the Practice, and Carers known to the Practice who are not aware of the Service available.

*As regards the poor attendance at the Faringdon Carers Group, might it be an idea for the outreach worker to attend the Flu Clinics, thus making it easier for an unaware or hesitant Carer to

take the first step? Apparently this has happened elsewhere, but there are rather a large number of such clinics. Still it could be hoped that stronger liaison between the Service and the Practice might assist in preserving the Group's existence.

*On the subject of the ring-fenced budget for Carers Oxfordshire, is this a nationwide Government promoted policy, or one confined to Oxfordshire? Catherine was not certain, but suspected it was local rather than national.

*The next question was about the situation where one of a couple does some caring for the other and vice versa – does this qualify? Known as 'co-dependency' in the trade there is plenty of it, and it does.

*Followed two questions about the Emergency Caring Service – what can happen when the Carer is suddenly taken ill or unavailable. Who provides the service? Answer – the County Council. Flyers were available outlining what is on offer, providing the person being cared for has been registered and then issued with a card confirming entitlement. Emergency carers are provided, free for 24-72 hours.

*Dr. Douglas was asked about additional health services in Faringdon. The Oxford Commissioning Group have not successfully challenged the Hospital Managers over their failure / refusal to devolve such service to GP Practices. Dr. Douglas opined that, despite what is said, GPs are not, yet anyhow, in control but that it is early days for the OCG and there are some signs of it getting to greater grips with such matters.

In thanking everyone in the room, Marcus closed proceedings by referring to the PPG and its activities and emphasised that it is very open to new members or suggestions for other events it might promote.